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Freedom Of The Press - Switzerland (2011)

Status: Free
Legal Environment: 5
Political Environment: 3
Economic Environment: 5
Total Score: 13

Freedom of the press is guaranteed under Article 16 of the Swiss Federal Constitution, while Article 93/4 explicitly guarantees freedom of the written press. The penal code prohibits racial hatred or discrimination. In September 2010, a ruling against the Turkish Workers' Party was upheld, after it was convicted in 2007 of denying the Armenian genocide. The law does not explicitly prohibit anti-Semitic speech or Holocaust denial, but there have been convictions for such forms of expression, though none were reported in 2010. In 2009, a report showed that the transparency law that went into effect in 2006 has only been used around 550 times, and it was determined that most media outlets and other interested groups were not aware of its existence. There are also numerous exceptions to the law, including banking information.

Swiss broadcast media are dominated by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR), which must broadcast content in each of Switzerland's four official languages—French, German, Italian, and Romansch. Because of the linguistic divisions, most private stations are limited to local or regional broadcasts. Foreign TV channels accounted for 60 percent of viewership in 2008. The printed press is highly concentrated. According to the European Journalism Centre, media concentration forces single newspaper titles to merge or shut down. The internet was accessed by approximately 84 percent of the population in 2010. In September 2010, a Swiss court ruled that IP addresses are personal information, and that companies that survey person-to-person file sharing to curb copyright infringement no longer have the right to do so.